



Fall 2008

The Commissioner's Commentary...

A Family Affair for Viteritto

Many of you will recall that on May 17, 2007, the New Jersey Department of Corrections formally dedicated a memorial to its officers who had died in the line of duty. The centerpiece of the memorial is a granite and brick wall that includes the name of each officer who made the ultimate sacrifice.

The visitors commemorated their time at the memorial by placing three red roses by the plate bearing Officer Victor Viteritto's name.

Shortly after the dedication, Anthony Viteritto's son told him about an article he'd seen in the newspaper chronicling what had transpired. That set in motion a chain of events that clearly illustrates the significance of the memorial.

One of the officers honored in the memorial is Victor Viteritto, Anthony's older brother, who had been stabbed to death by an inmate more than 57 years ago. A short time after hearing about the newspaper story, Mr. Viteritto made

his way to the department's Central Office headquarters to see the memorial for himself. During his visit, he shared memories of his brother with a handful of NJDOC staff members.

Thankfully, he also made Flora Contreras, his brother's widow, aware of the memorial. That led to a visit from Ms. Contreras, who was accompanied to the memorial by Mary Ann and Joseph Kuhn, her sister and brother-in-law. Coincidentally, prior to his retirement, Mr. Kuhn was a classification officer at New Jersey State Prison who spent more than three decades with the department.

I was honored to accompany the trio to the memorial wall during their visit, which took place on May 15, 2008. The visitors commemorated their time at the memorial by placing three red roses by the plate bearing Officer Viteritto's name.

His loved ones related to us that Victor Viteritto was a football and track star at Trenton High School. Shortly before his death, he had purchased a piece of land on which he intended to open up an ice cream store.



Commissioner George Hayman

Then came February 28, 1951. On that tragic day, Officer Viteritto and another officer were transporting an inmate from the Bergen County Courthouse to what was then known as Trenton State Prison (now New Jersey State Prison). While traveling along Route 1, the inmate, who was riding in the back seat, slipped out of his handcuffs. It was later determined that he had been treated at the prison infirmary that morning and had managed to get hold of grease, which he smeared on his wrists. With his hands free, the inmate used a strip of sharpened steel, which he had taped to his leg, to fatally stab Officer Viteritto. As his partner stopped the car, he was slashed across the stomach.

The inmate then fled from the vehicle and ran across an open field, with passing motorists in pursuit. He ultimately was surrounded and surrendered without a struggle. The two officers were taken to Middlesex General Hospital, where Officer Viteritto was pronounced dead. His partner was treated and released.

Now and forever, Victor Viteritto – officer, husband, brother – is enshrined on our memorial for fallen officers, along with the others who have given their life while serving the NJDOC.

By Lt. Joseph Polyi

I had the privilege of attending Operation “Bosslift,” a program by the New Jersey Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve, on July 9 and 10. The program enables employers and supervisors of National Guardsmen and Reservists to visit and observe their employees/subordinates as they train in preparation for deployment.



Lt. Joseph Polyi stands by the entrance to Edna Mahan Correctional Facility for Women.

I was invited in my capacity as the supervisor of Correction Officer Recruit/U.S. Army Specialist 4 Justin Seguine of Edna Mahan Correctional Facility for Women. Officer Seguine also happens to serve with my brother – Senior Correction Officer/U.S. Army Corporal Thomas Polyi of Mountainview Youth Correctional Facility – with “C” Troop, 102nd RSTA (Reconnaissance, Surveillance and Target Acquisition), of the N.J. Army National Guard 50th Brigade Combat Team. The team trained at Fort Bliss, Texas/New Mexico, for deployment to Iraq with the mission of conducting “detainee operations” in theater.

Operation “Bosslift” departed McGuire Air Force Base on a Wednesday morning aboard a New Jersey Air National Guard KC-135 refueling tanker en route to Fort Bliss. During the inbound flight, we observed the refueling of an AWACS plane. After landing, we were transported by bus to Fort McGregor, a remote corner of Fort Bliss in New Mexico that has been turned into a replica of detention facilities in Iraq. There, we

observed four training sites.

As an 18-year veteran of the New Jersey Department of Corrections and a former U.S. Marine, I was impressed with both the 20-day “corrections” training program and the close-quarter combat training the Army provided. After previous problems with detention facilities in Iraq, the Army reached out to civilian corrections agencies in the United States and has implemented education, visitation, vocational and improved medical programs with great success. Some of the training included use of force, searching, transportation, forced cell extractions and interpersonal communications. The less-than-lethal portion included specialty impact munitions, tasers and the FN 303 .68 cal less-lethal-launcher that the NJDOC’s Special Operations Group also utilizes.

The final phase of my visit was an opportunity to observe a squad of “C” Troop, 102nd RSTA, simulate a helicopter landing and clear out two buildings of insurgents – role-played by soldiers and civilian contractors – armed with AK 47s.

Members of the “Bosslift” then had dinner with their employees/subordinates in one of the mess halls. After dinner and a photo with the Adjutant General of New Jersey, Major General Glenn K. Rieth, I said a final farewell to COR/Spec. 4 Seguine and my brother, SCO/Cpl. Polyi.

The next day, the “Bosslift” group had breakfast in an Army mess hall and toured the Army’s Sgt. Major Academy, a 10-month school of leadership and higher learning for Sergeants Major of all branches of the service as well as foreign senior enlisted personnel. After returning to the terminal building at Biggs Army Airfield, many members of the “Bosslift” – including government officials, police chiefs and business/corporate representatives – participated in a signing ceremony, where we signed certificates of support for the Guard and Reserve. I took great pride in signing on behalf of the NJDOC.

On the return flight, we saw the refueling of a B-1 and landed in McGuire AFB just after 6 p.m. I was subsequently treated to a front-page article in the July 10 *Asbury Park Press*, written by a reporter who was in my group. The article was accompanied by a photo of my brother’s fire team after clearing one of the “Iraqi” buildings.

After previous problems with detention facilities in Iraq, the Army reached out to civilian corrections agencies in the United States and has implemented education, visitation, vocational and improved medical programs with great success.

Lt. Joseph Polyi is a member of the custody staff at Edna Mahan Correctional Facility for Women.

The telephone call came on a springtime Friday afternoon at 3:30 p.m. It was the Federal Bureau of Investigation on the line, requesting information that it needed for a court case the following Monday morning.

The beginning of David Hardrick's weekend would have to wait.

Hardrick, an executive assistant at the Central Reception and Assignment Facility (CRAF), understood the desperation in the caller's voice. "It was Friday at the end of the day," he explained with a chuckle, "a time when state workers are supposedly taking off."

Hardrick gathered the necessary materials together and faxed them to the FBI in a timely fashion. It wasn't until months later that he learned that the documentation he provided was a critical piece of evidence in New Jersey's second-ever federal capital murder trial. The trial was the culmination of what had been a two-year investigation. Ultimately, the defendant was found guilty and sentenced to life in prison.

So pleased was the FBI with Hardrick's assistance that they presented him with an award for distinguished service.

"When the woman called to tell me I'd be getting an award in recognition of my work with the FBI, I wasn't even sure what she was referring to," the 52-year-old Hardrick admitted. "She told me how pleased they were with the expeditious manner in which I handled their request, but the fact is, I receive similar kinds of requests for materials all the time. For example, I deal with the Attorney General's Office on a regular basis, and it's certainly not unusual for them to make time-sensitive, last-minute requests. Any time I get a subpoena or any other request from a law enforcement agency, it becomes a priority."

On February 26, 2008 – almost a year after the initial phone call – Hardrick attended a ceremony at the FBI Building in Newark, where he received his award, which read: "The FBI extends its appreciation for your outstanding assistance in a joint investigative effort. Your contributions were immeasurable, and you have the gratitude of the FBI for all you did to help accomplish the objectives of the investigation. You can be proud of the role you played, and I join my associates with whom you worked in congratulating you on a job well done." The certificate is signed by FBI Director Robert S. Mueller, III.

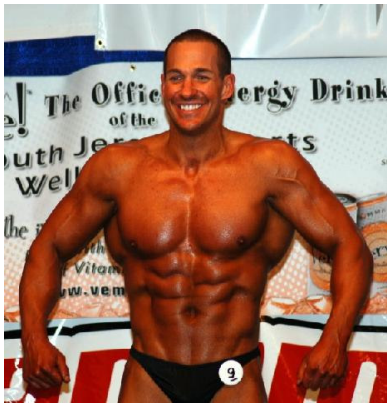
"When I show the award to somebody, the reaction is usually something like, 'Whoa!' But I try to keep it in perspective," said Hardrick, who has been with the New Jersey Department of Corrections for 29 years, the last six at CRAF.

"It was the first time I'd received an award like this, and it's a great honor," he continued, "but I was basically just doing my job."



David Hardrick, an executive assistant at CRAF, displays the award for distinguished service he received from the FBI.

The day begins with a cardiovascular workout before showering and leaving for work. Forget about pizza and cheeseburgers. The lunchbox is stuffed with dry chicken breast, brown rice and broccoli. At the end of the workday, you go home long enough to eat dinner, then head to the gym. Make time for another cardio workout before bed.



Mike Ritter strikes a pose.

The next day? Repeat.

Welcome to the world of competitive bodybuilding, a world whose inhabitants include New Jersey Department of Corrections employees Michael Ritter and Jerome Scott.

“No matter where you finish, it’s an accomplishment just to make it to a show, because of everything you have to go through,” said Ritter, coordinator of the critically acclaimed Project PRIDE (Promoting Responsibility in Drug Education) program, through which offenders share their stories with students.

“Jerry and I often get asked how much money we can win by competing,” he continued. “When you tell people you don’t win any money, they look at us like we’re crazy. The bottom line is, we do it because we enjoy it.”

Added Scott, a senior investigator in the Special Investigations Division: “It’s a selfish sport, because it takes time away from everything else in your life. But it provides you with a real sense of purpose, and it certainly keeps you in shape. And I’ll take being in shape over having a gut full of doughnuts any day of the week.”

The most recent show for both Ritter and Scott was the Mr. Natural South Jersey competition, which took place in Atlantic City during Memorial Day weekend. Ritter placed first among light-heavyweights (176-198 pounds), while Scott was second in the super-heavyweight (225 pounds and above) class. Before that, in January 2008, both competed in the Mid-Atlantic Natural Classic and Fitness in East Brunswick.

While Ritter’s involvement in competitive bodybuilding dates back to 1999, the show in East Brunswick was Scott’s first.

“Back in the late 1990s, some of the guys at my gym suggested that I give bodybuilding a try,” recalled Ritter, 38, who played football and baseball at Harry Truman High School in Bucks County, Pa., then shifted to powerlifting at what then was known as Trenton State College (now the College of New Jersey).

“As soon as I tried it, I was hooked. I loved the fact that you set a goal and went after it. I competed for a few years, then took some time off and eventually got back into it.

“Jerry and I met back in 1997, when we worked together at the Boot Camp (now known as the Stabilization and Reintegration Program), and we’ve remained friends ever since. So when I started competing again, I put the bug in his ear the same way the guys at the gym had put the bug in my ear nine or 10 years ago.”

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NJDOC Employees Enter World of Competitive Bodybuilding

Scott was an all-America middle-distance runner at Rancocas Valley High School in Mount Holly, who also ran track at the University of Tennessee before joining the Marines. He was persuaded by Ritter's enthusiasm toward bodybuilding.

"I've always trained with weights, but bodybuilding was new to me," related Scott, a 37-year-old father of four. "The first thing I learned is that simply being big isn't what the sport is all about. It's about having muscle mass and being as lean as possible. You can be as big as you want, but if you don't have 'cuts,' you aren't going to be a successful bodybuilder."

"No matter how much time Mike and others spent telling me what to expect, I was really nervous about my first show. I've worked as a model and done underwear modeling, so I wasn't embarrassed about getting on a stage wearing hardly any clothing. But that first show was tough, because it was all new to me. The second show was much easier. I had a better idea what to expect, so I was able to focus on what I needed to be doing."

What he – and Ritter – needed to be doing was impress the judges through a series of poses.

"Posing is a workout in itself," the 245-pound Scott said. "Even when you're practicing posing, you're sweating. Your body is tense, you're trying to control your breathing and, of course, every movement. It takes a lot of discipline."

Discipline. It's a word that Scott and Ritter repeat over and over during discussions about the elements competitive bodybuilding – from diet, to twice-daily cardiovascular training, to weight training four or five days per week.

"It's a lifestyle," Ritter said. "Fortunately, with the careers we've chosen, it's a lifestyle that fits in well. If we're healthy and in good condition, it helps to present us as positive role models to the public and even to inmates."

Ritter pointed out that chemically enhanced physiques are decidedly not part of the lifestyle to which he referred. That's why he and Scott only compete in natural shows.

"In natural bodybuilding, if you gain one pound of muscle in a year, that's pretty significant," Ritter explained. "With steroids, you might be capable of gaining 10 or 15 pounds of muscle in a year. I can't speak for shows that aren't natural, but there are professional bodybuilders, and whenever you introduce money into the equation, that changes everything."

"At our level, we obviously want to win," Ritter concluded, "but that's not all there is to it. I'm training with my buddy. We're competing in shows together. That's good stuff."



Jerome Scott prepares to compete.

People usually are unaware of the legacy they will leave behind for their children and future generations. They have no concept of how their lives will impact the lives of others for the good of humanity.

Such was the case with Teresa Dare DuBois, who died in December 2002 when she was just 28 years old.



Jim DuBois

Teresa was the wife of Gregory DuBois, a senior correction officer with the New Jersey Department of Corrections' Central Transportation Unit, and the daughter-in-law of Assistant Director of the Office of Internal Support and Outreach Services E. James Dubois, who retired from the NJDOC in August 2008.

Following Teresa's death, loved ones contemplated how they might honor her. Specifically, they considered what could be done in memory of Teresa to assist cancer patients in building lasting memories with their families.

It wasn't long before the Dare to Dream Foundation was born. The memorial was established with just one goal in mind: to provide children diagnosed with cancer and/or children affected by cancer, along with their immediate family members, with a vacation package to an appropriate theme park of their choosing.

The driving force behind honoring Teresa in this manner was a family vacation that Teresa, a Walt Disney enthusiast, made with her husband and son to Disney World following a tedious journey of cancer treatments. Teresa enjoyed a wonderful time while on vacation with her family and returned home beaming. Sadly, she passed away shortly thereafter.

With her last family vacation in mind, relatives and friends decided to memorialize Teresa by providing families in similar situations an opportunity to experience what Teresa did, a much-deserved vacation and a chance to build memories with loved ones.

Since its inception in 2003, the Dare to Dream Foundation has provided 12 Southern New Jersey families battling cancer with dream vacations. While recipients have their choice of where they would like to vacation, Disney World, by far, has been the most popular site. Yet, regardless of which theme park a family decides to visit, all expenses are completely paid by the foundation, a non-profit 501(c) (3) organization, run strictly by volunteers.

"We're not trying to create a burden for the family," related Jim DuBois, president of Dare to Dream Foundation, Inc. "We want to create a stress-free process, so that all their expenses are paid. We do all of the booking. We provide them with a limousine to and from the airport, spending money, cameras, etc. Everything's paid for.

"We want to provide families a break from the doctors, nurses, hospitals and the treatments, because that process is very draining," DuBois continued. "So, when the time is right, and they're able to travel, then we are there for them. We provide them with the support they need to travel. We see it as a break from all of the tension and all of the procedures, as well as a

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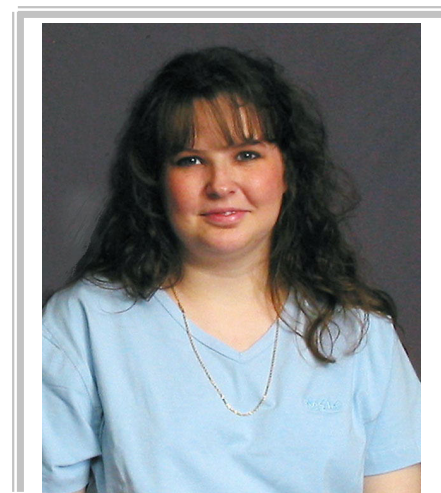
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The Lasting Legacy of Teresa Dare DuBois

time to build memories. They can finally get away as a family.”

In an open letter published in a recent Dare to Dream newsletter, an appreciative dream vacation recipient poignantly captures the vision of the wish-granting organization. “Our trip to Disney was the trip of a lifetime,” the breast cancer survivor writes. “It was planned thoroughly from beginning to end. All we had to do was pack our bags. As we prepared, my husband kept asking how we could give back. My response was MAKE MEMORIES! If nothing else stuck out in my head, I remembered that Chris and Greg (Teresa’s mother-in-law and husband) told us to make memories and we did just that. We made sure that we exemplified the vision of the Dare to Dream Foundation and hope that we did an outstanding job upholding the memories of Teresa!”

“Teresa was a quiet person,” DuBois reflected. “She never wanted recognition or anything like that, but I think she would be pleased to know that other families are benefiting from an experience that she had. Not in the cancer sense, but in the family memory sense.”



Teresa Dare DuBois

The parking lot in a Mt. Laurel shopping center is strangely crowded, considering the time (about 5 a.m.) and the date (not the day after Thanksgiving). Coffee cups abound, as do vests, each displaying a law enforcement agency – New Jersey Department of Corrections, New Jersey State Police, FBI – and while the camaraderie is evident, so is the determination, as officers, all members of the New Jersey/ New York Regional Fugitive Task Force, huddle around Principal Investigator Ellis Allen and Senior Investigator Dan Klotz as they brief their comrades on the day's quarry.

Formed in 2002, the NJ/NY Regional Fugitive Task Force is an unprecedented law enforcement initiative that combines the resources, intelligence-gathering capabilities, investigative information and expertise of 50 law enforcement agencies and more than 150 federal, state, county and local law enforcement officers. Spearheaded by the U.S. Marshals Service, the Regional Fugitive Task Force represents the most ambitious cooperative law enforcement initiative ever undertaken in the State of New Jersey to target, identify and apprehend New Jersey's "Most Wanted" fugitives.

In 2007 alone, the NJDOC Fugitive Unit made 85 apprehensions and countless others as members of the Regional Fugitive Task Force. Most absconders are out for just a few days, some for weeks, and still another very small segment is gone for decades. Most fugitives, when confronted, are peaceful.

"Their girlfriends or families talk to them on the phone and beg them to cooperate" says Allen. "They don't want them to get hurt or to get charged with new offenses."

But for the members of the Fugitive Unit, any apprehension can become dangerous in a second.

"You always have to keep in mind that they may be armed, they may be combative, they may have substance abuse issues," Klotz points out. "These can combine to make a recipe for disaster."

Klotz – described by co-workers as a bulldog – has been working on a so-called "cold case." Inmate Maximo Jurado had absconded from the Marlboro Camp in 1979, and even though 28 years had passed, Jurado was never off the radar. He used fictitious names and Social Security numbers, and he moved around the country frequently, to include South Carolina, Pennsylvania and Connecticut throughout the years. However, Klotz was patient – and dogged. He developed information from contacts that Jurado, now 75, was living in Philadelphia.

"You look at their habits, you begin to see patterns in their life," says Klotz, "and this guy is no exception."

The briefing finished, the caravan moves into formation across the Ben Franklin Bridge and into Pennsylvania. Crown Victoria sedans, minivans and pickup trucks cross the Delaware River to meet up with officers from the Philadelphia Police Department.

Also in attendance this rainy morning is a reporter and photographer from the Associated Press and a public information officer from the NJDOC press office squeezed into the back seat of a minivan driven by Lt. Brian Slattery of the New Jersey State Police, with Ellis Allen riding shotgun.

Taking their assigned places down the street and around the corner from the suspect's home, the waiting begins, as dawn reveals an urban landscape rife with broken crack vials, gang graffiti and empty beer bottles – from a fugitive's point of



Representing the New Jersey Department of Corrections Fugitive Unit during an interview on MSNBC are Ellis Allen (left) and Dan Klotz

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Fugitive Unit Is All About Apprehensions

view, a perfect place to “hide in plain sight.” A smattering of youngsters pick through the rubbish on their way to school, some showing mild interest in the “strange” cars parked on their street. But no children are seen leaving Jurado’s darkened home, and after a flurry of cell phone calls among team members, the decision is made to move on to another residence where the fugitive has been seen in recent days.

Despite the glamorous depictions in movies and television, “stakeouts” can be uncomfortable, monotonous and tiring, often punctuated with disappointment and false leads.

“There is going to be a certain amount of repetition in this job,” remarks Allen during the lull. “These guys (the fugitives) don’t understand we’re just going to keep coming after them. Doesn’t matter if they’re out for 10 minutes or 10 years, they owe the state their time, and everybody on this team is committed to keeping our streets safe.”

Adds Slattery: “Technology will only take you so far – computers are very helpful – but you still have to pound the pavement and knock on a lot of doors.”

As morning slips into the afternoon, however, there is a sudden staccato of police radios and ringing cell phones, as the Philadelphia PD has spotted a car thought to belong to escapee Jurado parked several blocks away, in front of a female acquaintance’s apartment. “Wig wags” are activated, vests are adjusted and adrenaline is running high as members of the Fugitive Unit converge on the scene. Road closures, construction and a tractor trailer accident seemingly conspire to delay the team’s response. Klotz directs Investigator Robert Olmo and some of the vehicles to the street behind the girlfriend’s house to cover the back door, and desultory conversation among neighbors gives way to sharp knocking on the door and “Open up, Police!”

The young woman who answers the door is truly dazed as she looks at the officers and the camera that are parked on her stoop. She gestures for them to come inside and indicates that her boyfriend is up the stairs. Standing in his underwear, and bearing little resemblance to his mug shot of nearly 30 years ago, is Maximo Jurado.

At first, denial is the name of the game. Insisting his name is “Jose,” fugitive Jurado finally asks to see the photo the officers carry with them -- the photo that has been on the “escapee” page of the New Jersey Department of Corrections Web site these many years.

Investigator Jerome Scott has a comment for Jurado. “You’re going back to Jersey, OK?” he says. “You remember that photo? Remember that man, when he escaped from jail in 1979?”

Of course, the question begs to be asked: Why risk a life on the run, possible capture and longer prison sentence on a break out?

Says Klotz: “I asked him, ‘Why’d you leave? Why’d you escape?’ And he told me, ‘It was for a woman. She wouldn’t wait for me, so I had to go after her.’ I said, ‘Well, where is she now?’ He said, ‘She left me 20 years ago.’”

The workday was finished, and Erin Earnest had just pulled out of the parking lot of South Woods State Prison on a late-June afternoon. As she proceeded through the intersection of Burlington and Buckshutem Roads, just a few blocks from the prison, her trip to pick up her children came to an unexpected and abrupt halt.

A sport utility vehicle traveling at a high rate of speed went through the red light at the intersection and collided with Earnest's vehicle. The impact, which caused the SUV to flip onto its side, virtually demolished Earnest's vehicle. Her more immediate concern, however, was the impact the accident had on her physically. While she had no idea how badly she was injured, she quickly realized that the vehicle's airbags deployed and that she couldn't open her car doors.

Fortunately for Earnest, she promptly received a little help from her friends. Co-workers Mark Watkins, a motor vehicle operator, and Scott McClellan, a principal investigator, were approaching the intersection in their vehicles and saw the accident unfold. They immediately provided assistance.

"At that point in time, to look up and see familiar faces was reassuring," said Earnest, an executive assistant to South Woods Administrator Karen Balicki. "They helped to keep a bad situation from becoming worse."

Watkins, a trained emergency medical technician, and McClellan checked to make certain both Earnest and the driver of the SUV were okay. McClellan contacted the local police department and blocked the intersection by activating the flashing lights on his own vehicle. Watkins, meanwhile, calmed Earnest until an ambulance arrived. He then assisted the medical personnel on the scene and persuaded Earnest to go directly to the hospital.

Although her vehicle needed to be replaced, Earnest's injuries proved to be relatively minor.



When Erin Earnest was involved in an accident down the road from South Woods State Prison, she was assisted by co-workers Scott McClellan (left) and Mark Watkins.

"I was driving right behind Erin, and I saw the whole thing," Watkins related. "Right after I saw it happen, I honestly thought it would be a lot worse. I knew it was Erin in the accident, and I when got to her, I was a little afraid of what I might find. Because of my EMT training, this wasn't the first time I stopped at an accident scene, but it was the first time I stopped for someone I knew."

When McClellan stopped, he was unaware that he knew the driver of one of the vehicles.

"I was just being a good citizen," he said. "The way I look at it, if it was me or a member of my family who was involved in an accident, I would hope someone would stop to help."

The two men earned Earnest's unyielding gratitude.

"Mark and Scott are both quiet and dependable at work," she said. "They were the same way at the scene of the accident."

The Alter Ego of Warren Murray...

Everybody Loves a Clown

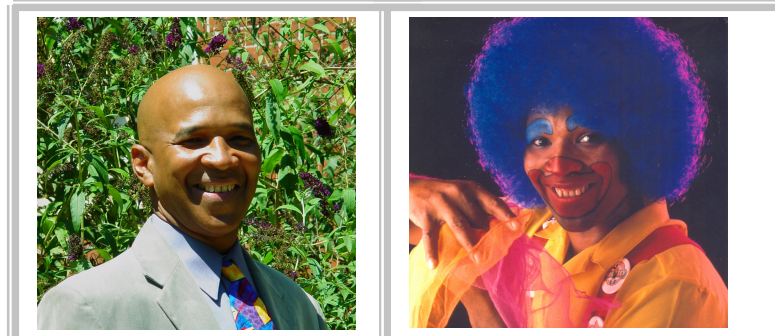
Most people would consider “clowning around” a waste of precious time, especially in this day and age when there seem to be more tasks to accomplish than time in which to do so. However, Warren Murray’s perspective on the matter is quite the opposite.

Murray, a 32-year veteran of the New Jersey Department of Corrections, who moonlights as a professional magician and clown, would contend that he is not wasting time at all by participating in his extra-curricular clown activities. Instead, he would argue that he is bringing smiles to the faces of young people of all ages and backgrounds – including preschool children to teenagers, troubled youth and those who are developmentally challenged.

A senior vocation counselor at the Adult Diagnostic and Treatment Center, Murray’s second career as a professional clown and magician began in 1975 as a hospital volunteer. One thing led to another, and in 1977, he was hired by a major corporation to promote products and provide entertainment in the company’s restaurants.

Today, Murray is still “clowning around” with that same corporation. In addition, he volunteers at day care centers, schools and hospitals as Waldo the Clown, and at Ronald McDonald House brightening the lives of seriously ill children and their families.

During the past 33 years, Murray has appeared at thousands of events and entertained countless children. He has traveled extensively to almost every state in the country and throughout the Caribbean.



Warren Murray, before and after his alter ego metamorphosis.

“My work as a professional magician and clown has been extremely rewarding,” he said. “I have received just as much from all of the children I have entertained as they have received from me.”

Murray’s second vocation has even led him to television, where he has appeared in a number of commercials and public service announcements. In 2004, he landed on the big screen in a well-known documentary film.

Amazingly, in addition to his career with the NJDOC and his personal life, Murray remains as active as ever in his second profession. Somehow in the midst of family obligations and hobbies – including abstract painting and photography – he manages to find time in his schedule to appear at anywhere from 12 to 14 events per month.

“I try to stay busy at all times,” he related. “While my work as a clown is very fulfilling, it is also therapeutic. It helps me balance my life. It’s not tiresome at all. Actually, that’s my recreation.

“Most people don’t balance their lives, so they become frustrated,” Murray continued. “They work from Monday to Friday, waiting for the weekend. And when the weekend is over, they are frustrated again until Friday. Unfortunately, a lot of people don’t realize that every day counts. But my whole week is fulfilled – Monday to Sunday. I don’t worry about waiting until the weekend. You have to live for every day.”

The 15-year ADTC staff member, whose responsibilities include serving as coordinator of the eyeglass project and liaison for the inmate population and the stock market game, recognizes a definite connection between his NJDOC career and his clown profession.

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Everybody Loves a Clown

“Every day I go to work, I see what happens when people don’t do the right thing,” Murray shared. “So I go out and tell young kids that prison life is not the way to go. It’s not really what you want to do. Don’t even think about going to prison.”

Murray remains as committed to his career as he is to entertaining children. The dedication and the conscientious attitude that he has displayed throughout his employment with the NJDOC are particularly obvious, considering the awards he has received during his 32-year career.

In 1979, Murray was honored as the NJDOC Employee of the Year, while in 2006, he was bestowed the honor of Support Staff of the Year. Murray has also been recognized for 11 years of perfect attendance, including every year from 2000 to 2006.

When asked his secret for such a fulfilling life, Murray recalled an ancient Egyptian precept. The ancient Egyptians saw joy as a sacred responsibility. Further, they believed that upon death they would be asked two questions, and their answers would determine whether they could continue their journey into the afterlife. The first question was, “Did you bring joy?” The second was, “Did you find joy?”

Murray remains as committed to his career as he is to entertaining children.

“I think that’s basically what life is about – bringing joy to others and experiencing it yourself,” he reflected. “Life is short. You have to enjoy it, otherwise you’ve wasted it. I’m definitely enjoying life.”